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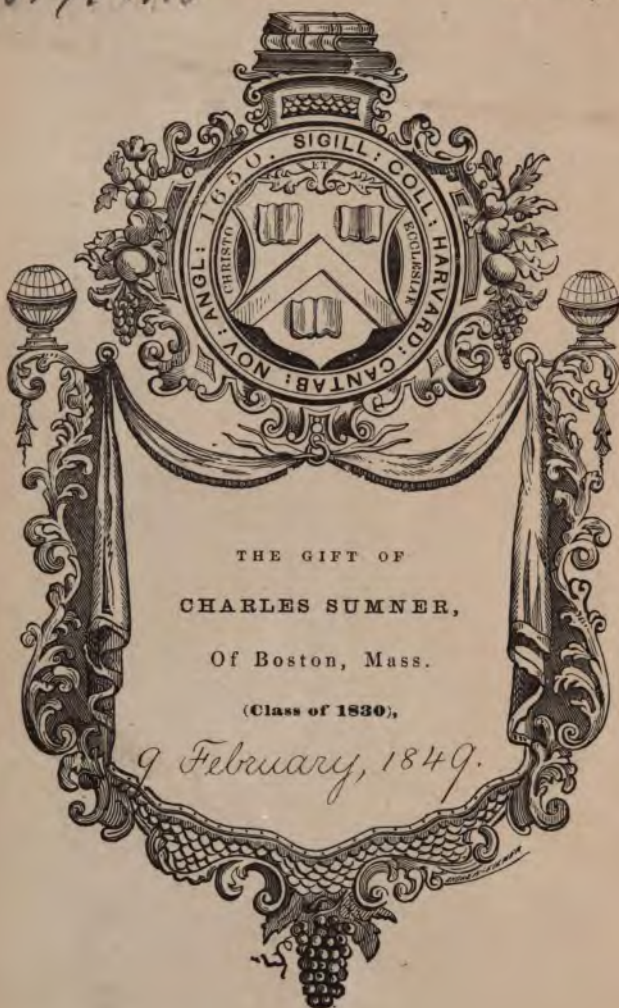


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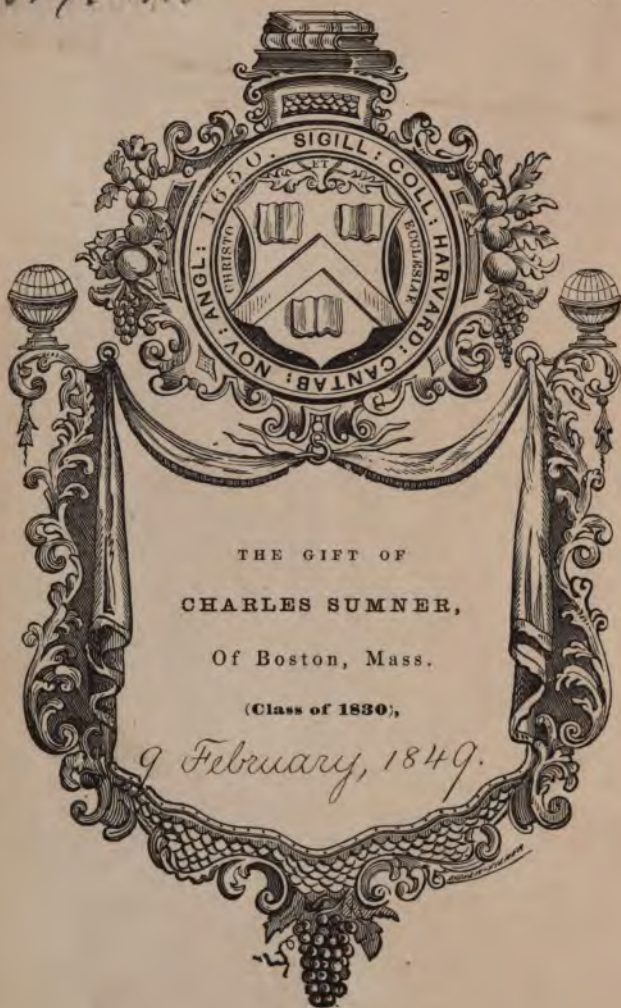






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Vol. 1873.









*With the Author's best regards*

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MR. WHARTON'S ADDRESS.

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1877



# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

THE OPENING OF THE NEW HALL

OF THE

ATHENÆUM OF PHILADELPHIA,

ON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18th, 1847,

BY

THOMAS I. WHARTON, Esq.

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE DIRECTORS.

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PHILADELPHIA:

JOHN C. CLARK, PRINTER, 60 DOCK STREET.

1847.

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1887  
C. of Charles Sumner Esq  
of Boston



*Philadelphia, October 20th, 1847.*

DEAR SIR,

At a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, held this day, it was unanimously—*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Board be presented to our Vice-President, THOMAS I. WHARTON, Esq., for his able and instructive discourse on the opening of the New Hall of the Athenæum, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

The undersigned were appointed a committee to carry into effect the Resolution of the Board.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

W. H. DILLINGHAM,  
CLEMENT C. BIDDLE,  
J. J. VANDERKEMP.

TO THOMAS I. WHARTON, Esq.

~~~~~  
*150 Walnut Street, October 21st, 1847.*

GENTLEMEN,

I am glad to find that the Directors are satisfied with the Address. I wish that circumstances had permitted me to bestow more time upon its preparation, and thus to have rendered it more worthy of the occasion, and of the approbation of a Board with whom I have been so long connected, and for whom I have so much respect and regard.

As it is, however, I send the MS. for the purpose mentioned in the Resolution;

and remain, very faithfully and truly,

Your friend and servant,

T. I. WHARTON.

WM. H. DILLINGHAM,  
CLEMENT C. BIDDLE,  
JOHN J. VANDERKEMP,

*Esquires.*



## ADDRESS.

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THE Directors of the Athenæum of Philadelphia have requested me to say a few words to those who have done them the honour to be present on this occasion; when their building is, for the first time, opened for the general purposes of the establishment.

Without over-estimating the value or usefulness of this Institution, or feeling any undue satisfaction in respect to the edifice in which we are now assembled, I may take the opportunity to congratulate you upon the circumstance that another building dedicated to Letters and Science, has arisen to ornament, no matter in how small a degree, a city, whose reproach it certainly was, at one time, that all her architectural efforts were displayed in the erection of temples devoted to the worship of Mammon.

It is a good sign of the times, and of happy augury for the place, when we see men willing to withdraw themselves, for however short a period, from the absorbing occupations of the counting-house and the forum, for the purpose of engaging in pursuits of a merely abstract and intellectual character, which pay no pecuniary interest and yield no tangible dividend; to invest some of their capital in stocks which are never heard of at the broker's board; and to turn aside occasionally from the bustle and the strife, the fever and the competition of this busy and sordid world of ours, for the pure waters and quiet retreats of Letters and the Arts.

If Athens and Rome had erected no other public buildings, than such as were dedicated to the business of banking, or the con-

cerns of trade and commerce, with what different feelings should we be possessed in visiting their ruins or remains, from those which now elevate the mind or melt the heart of the traveller in his pilgrimage through those holy cities. Sooner or later, some time or other, individuals and communities, cities and citizens, both realize the truth and learn the pregnant meaning of that solemn saying, that they can take nothing out of this world with them; and (humanly speaking) of all they may leave behind them, they will find that there is nothing real but the unsubstantial; nothing truly enduring but the creations of the mind and the intellect. Happy the man and happy the people, to whom it is vouchsafed to see through its gaudy and meretricious ornaments, into the real value of this world's wealth; truly happy those, who, instead of gathering up their wealth into heaps, offensive to the sight and the senses, or scattering it heedlessly or wickedly abroad, and rendering it tributary to the production of noxious or useless weeds; employ it in fertilizing the moral and intellectual fields, and in encouraging the growth of whatever is ornamental and useful for the better part of our nature.

The Institution, among whose books we are now assembled, owed its origin to that taste for literary pursuits, which has always, to some extent, characterized this city. In the year 1813, half a dozen young men of Philadelphia, feeling the want of a convenient place of common resort, in which their leisure hours could be passed, without danger to morals or tastes, came together and arranged a plan for the establishment of reading rooms. I happened to be one of the number then assembled, was one of the first Board of Directors; and through the good nature of the Stockholders and their practical disinclination for the political tenet of rotation in office, have now, for thirty-four years, been annually re-elected, and performed, according to the measure of my abilities, the honourable, but I must admit, not very arduous duties of the station. Looking back upon the records of the Institution, I am struck with the cir-

cumstance, that, with the single exception of my friend Mr. Dillingham, to whose exertions and good judgment we are largely indebted for the successful completion of this building, and for other valuable services, I am the only remaining member of the original board. In the comparatively short period that has elapsed since the first election of officers, Presidents and Vice Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries and Directors, have been removed by death or infirmities; and of the numbers who have resorted to these fountains of information and entertainment, few probably remain of those who witnessed their original scantiness and insignificance. *Ars longa, Vita brevis*, is a trite old saying, which, common place as it is, none of us seem to put any particular faith in, until we are suddenly arrested by some fact respecting ourselves and our contemporaries, such as I have adverted to. Here is an Institution, the work of men's hands, which, though little more than a quarter of a century old, has survived the greater number of its founders; and is destined probably to endure, while wave after wave of human beings has broken at its base.

Nor is the change of the circumstances connected with the ground upon which this building is erected, unworthy of remark.

In the year 1813, when the subscribers to the Athenæum first assembled, this lot was part of a considerable piece of ground, the northern portion of which, that is, the front upon Walnut street, was occupied as the prison-house and prison-yard of criminals and convicts; and the southern, or Prune street portion, was used for the safekeeping of persons imprisoned for debt or other civil delinquencies.

Crime and poverty, then, were the tenants of the two apartments, separated by a court yard, of the gloomy tenement which then occupied this space. Crime either languished in what was called solitary confinement, dark, idle, and uninstructed, or was set to labour in a common and noisy work-shop, the chief business of which was sawing stone; the most frequent, because the



simplest of employments. Poverty dragged through the tedious day, without occupation or resources, until the regular return of the insolvent court operated as a general jail delivery, clearing the tenants for the time being; whose places were soon supplied by a fresh swarm, to be in their turn swept away. Criminals still abound; and punishments, in one shape or other, it would seem, must needs be inflicted. The place and the method of punishment have been changed: let us hope that, with the general diffusion of a religious and moral training, the result may be what the worthy and intelligent advocates of solitary labour have predicted.

Imprisonment for *debt*, properly speaking, is now wholly abolished with us. For some time previous to the total abandonment of the system, the number of inmates in "the Debtors' Apartment" (as it was denominated,) had been gradually diminishing, by the operation of successive acts of the legislature, which first prohibited the arrest of females for debt; next, the imprisonment of men for debts under five dollars; and, then, authorized debtors arrested in any case, to give bond, with surety, for their appearance at the next insolvent court, instead of awaiting its return in actual confinement. How far this great experiment will succeed in a trading community; what are to be its effects upon the system of credit which has prevailed so extensively with us; whether it will ultimately benefit or injure the fair trader, and the honest insolvent, remains yet to be seen and determined. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to enable political philosophers to arrive at a sound opinion upon the subject. Perhaps, some recent cases would lead to the suspicion, that the stream of retribution for violated duties or engagements, which formerly flowed through the insolvent court, now finds its outlet in the deeper and darker passages of the penal tribunals.

Be that as it may, it is certain that this neighbourhood has been greatly improved in its external character, and, let us hope, in the

morals and tastes of its inhabitants, by the substitution of private residences, and of the neat edifice in which we are now assembled, for the unsightly building called the "Walnut Street Prison," with its heavy and lofty stone wall on the Sixth street side; and its dark and comfortless appurtenance on Prune street.

Nor, at the time I speak of, was the western prospect from this lot much more cheering or picturesque than the appearance of the lot itself. What is now the Washington Square; planted with beautiful trees; rejoicing in almost perpetual verdure; animated and enlivened by the presence of the lovely and the gentle, by the voice of infancy and childhood in the midst of enjoyment, by the song of birds, as happy and innocent as themselves, was then a place of graves and silence and desolation, popularly and traditionally called "The Potter's Field;" overgrown with weeds and brambles; a place where the dead bodies of strangers and outlaws were shovelled into the ground, without a stone to serve as a memorial of their wanderings or crimes; and with only here and there a humble attempt at distinction by means of a wooden memorial, or "even those bones from insult to protect" by some frail effort at a paling or enclosure. Of all the improvements which we have witnessed in Philadelphia, within the last thirty years, the planting and opening of these public squares is, to my mind, the most beautiful and salutary. I never pass through them or near them, and see the happy and healthy beings who people them, enjoying the purified air, and the fresh verdure, and the music of the birds, and all the other sights and sounds of rural life; women and children free from annoyance or the apprehension of it, though unguarded and unprotected, without feeling doubly contented with my country, and the place of my birth and residence. These examples and evidences of simple manners and undoubting confidence, of deference for the sex, and of respect for the innocence and purity of children, are not to be witnessed, as far as my experience and information go, in any other large city either of

Europe or this country. Long may this, if you please, Quaker simplicity and ingenuousness, characterize this city ; and I trust that I shall not be considered as departing too far from my subject, in expressing an earnest hope that all who hear me will, in their respective spheres, exert whatever they may possess of energy and influence, to discountenance every practice and pursuit which may have a tendency, however slight, to deprive these squares of their bright and innocent inhabitants, or in any respect to diminish the virtuous security of our public streets and thoroughfares.

To return, however, to the cradle of the Athenæum. The immediate object of those by whom it was founded, was, as I have suggested, to provide and furnish suitable and convenient reading rooms ; that is, places in which periodical works of all descriptions, newspapers, magazines, reviews, registers, and all other journals ; books of immediate and current interest ; books of reference and information ; maps and charts ; could be read or consulted at all hours of the day and during the waking hours of the evening. To these were to be added, as time and means would permit, collections in natural, physical and political history ; manuscripts ; and lectures on literature and kindred subjects.

It was not intended, nor is it now thought, to interfere, in any way, with the progress or prosperity of the Library Company of Philadelphia. Gentlemen, that noble institution, the worthy foundation and bequest to us of our honoured ancestors, is too firmly rooted, I trust, in the affection and confidence of this community, to be shaken or impoverished by the growth of any other literary establishment. Founded one hundred and fifteen years ago, and already one of the classics of this juvenile country, it furnished, I believe, the first instance and example of a library of circulation, composed of useful and instructive books ; and, by enabling the subscribers to carry home with them what they had not the means or opportunity of purchasing, it added to the attractions of domestic life ; retained within that hallowed sphere many

an otherwise wandering footstep; and cultivated and perpetuated habits of mental and moral occupation, which, I venture to say, *no man ever regretted*. I speak with emphasis and earnestness in respect to that institution, because I am afraid that it is not sufficiently in our thoughts and purposes. We are so much accustomed to its presence among us; its movements are so silent and its results so unostentatious, that it seems to be considered one of those things of course, which must needs be, without our taking much thought about its condition or prospects; though, like the excellent water and still more excellent light with which we are supplied, we should feel, and sufficiently lament its loss, if by any accident we should be, even for a short time, deprived of it.

I take this occasion to express the earnest wish, that some of our wealthy citizens, in the disposal of their superfluous funds, either while living, or in the way of posthumous benefactions, would bear in mind that that inestimable collection of books and manuscripts, venerable from old age, hallowed from its association with the memories of our fathers and mothers; the largest collection in this country; is contained in a building of inadequate dimensions, and by reason of its construction peculiarly liable to the risk of destruction by fire.

Extensively useful, however, as the City Library was, and to whatever extent its collection might be enlarged, it could not consistently with its design and character, supply all the literary wants of a population like this. Its limited income, and other circumstances, prevented its doors being opened except during a portion of the day; and its purpose, as a library of circulation, seemed to forbid its being conveniently used as a place of resort for readers in general.

In a large city like this, perhaps in every community, experience proves that it is expedient to multiply the places of harmless amusement, and to make entertainment itself, if possible, tributary to mental and moral improvement. Say what we will about the

dignity of human nature, and the solemn importance of our political pursuits and destinies, it is certain that no living Cato can be always upon his pedestal: some portion of men's lives must be given to recreation, and if the higher and more intellectual varieties of amusement are not open to them, they will seek to gratify the universal desire in pursuits of more questionable propriety.

I have seen it stated somewhere, that in Paris, upon the evenings when the theatres happen to be closed, the authorities have found it necessary to double the police. This city is not exactly Paris; and I do not apprehend that if upon any occasion it should be found necessary or expedient to close the doors of the Athenæum, for a temporary purpose, our worthy mayor would consider it his duty to increase the numbers of his little army; but the moral of the anecdote is substantially true in all ages and countries. The question is not, whether recreation, amusement, relaxation, call it what you will, is necessary for human beings. That I take to be a settled point. But the object or effort is, or should be, to refine recreations, to multiply the inducements to intellectual exercise; to run opposition lines to those which are dangerous or doubtful; to set temptation against temptation; in short, to give to wisdom and virtue the attractive garments which draw so many into the companionship of their weaker or frailer sisters.

In England, the public mind seems, of late years, to have become deeply impressed with the truth and importance of these views; and of their especial value in reference to those classes of society, who are employed in mechanical or manufacturing labour. In Manchester and other places, institutions have been founded upon principles similar to this, and bearing the same name; to which men have been induced to resort, who have heretofore passed their leisure hours in scenes and amid associations of intemperance and vice. What is desirable and practicable there, is surely not less so here; and the probability is, that a greater degree of preparation for intellectual pursuits exists among our native



population than in any European town. Our system of universal education furnishes the rudiments of knowledge and the means for further mental development to all classes and condition of society ; but it must stop at a certain and not very elevated point. After that, the patient must minister to himself ; and the danger is, that either mental improvement will be totally neglected, or that it may be perverted to unholy or unprofitable purposes. If the excellent sentiments and principles and tastes, which are created or inculcated in our public schools, could be kept alive by means of institutions such as I have adverted to ; if, by the aid of attractions which are wholesome and legitimate, the young men of certain classes could be induced to resort to the pure and quiet waters of literature and science, what a blessing it would be to them and all of us ! How many a valuable hour now spent in low dissipation, in the brawling of politics, or the racing and rioting of fires, might be saved to the present and eternal welfare of the individual, and the blessing and benefit of the country. It is not the mere suggestion of national vanity, but a sober and well known truth, which employers of all descriptions bear testimony to, that our native workmen far surpass their European brethren, in quickness of intellect and power and facility of manipulation. Nature has furnished and provided all round and all about us wonderful means and appliances for success in all the mechanical and manual arts. The consequence of this, and of the abundant remuneration for labour among us, is a superabundance of that solemn and fearful thing called *leisure* ; and it is according to the method in which that surplus is disposed of, that the destinies of individuals and empires are too often shaped—rough hew them as we may. We have no reason to suppose that we, in this country, are differently constituted in respect to temperament, or less open to temptation than the people of other lands ; and holding it to be an unquestionable truth, that, under Providence, the continuance in their integrity of our social and political constitutions, depends upon the

right employment of their time by the great masses of the community, I trust that I shall be excused for urging upon those who hear me on this occasion, the importance of providing in every way for the existing deficiency; and, among other means of usefulness, the extension, though perhaps upon a different scale, yet upon similar principles, of institutions like this. I should like to see one in every ward.

I return, again, to the history of our Institution. On the 9th of February, 1814, when the articles of association were adopted, the number of subscribers amounted to two hundred: on the same day the first board of officers and directors was chosen; and on the 7th of March following, the Institution was first opened to the public, in the rooms, or rather room, for I believe there was but one, over the book store of Mr. Mathew Carey, the well known publisher and writer, at the south-east corner of Chesnut and Fourth streets. I ought not to mention the name of Mr. Carey, so well known and respected in this community for his public spirit and earnestness of purpose, without adding, that he bequeathed to the Athenæum a very large collection of bound volumes, containing pamphlets relating to the history and statistics of this country.

Among the officers and directors of the Athenæum in its earlier years, were some persons, whose names are (perhaps, I should say, were) familiar in our mouths as household words; men eminent for their station and virtues, or distinguished in politics or philosophy; men whose names are associated with our public or civic history. WILLIAM TILGHMAN was our first President, JAMES MEASE, the first Vice-President, ROBERTS VAUX, the first Treasurer, SAMUEL EWING, NICHOLAS BIDDLE, JOHN COLE LOWBER, GEORGE VAUX, WILLIAM LEHMAN, PETER STEPHEN DU PONCEAU, were among the early Managers.

WILLIAM TILGHMAN was, at the time of his election to the office of President of this Institution, the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania; and he held both offices until the period of his lamented death, the

30th of April, 1827; having for more than twenty years presided over the administration of justice in this Commonwealth, with a measure of wisdom and learning, purity of purpose and dignity of demeanour, talents, taste, and temper, which have seldom been united in one individual, and still more seldom continued to shed an undiminished light from so elevated a station, for such a term of years.

If the time of the decease of this eminent gentleman had been more recent; if, for instance, he had died in 1847, instead of 1827, you might have some reason to doubt the soundness or sincerity of the language I have just used, and might, perhaps, be disposed to include it in the category of those commonplaces, which, in the shape of resolutions or eulogiums, invariably succeed the demise of every judge and lawyer, and lead the laymen to suppose that there exists among those learned persons, a fraternal association similar to those funeral societies that prevail among mechanics; one of whose fundamental duties is to see that the body of a deceased member is decently interred, and that every thing about him offensive to surviving humanity shall be carefully concealed. The test of all these things is time. Most of the pyramids of praise, which are built over the remains of our deceased congressmen and lawyers, evaporate before the grass grows upon the grave;

“ All, all but truth falls still-born from the press,  
Like the last journal or a new address.”

After the lapse of twenty years, however, one may safely pronounce upon the durability of a public reputation: and now that a sort of posterity has come in to take part in the judgment, we may be sure that we are not far wrong in our estimate of the character of Chief Justice TILGHMAN.

For my part, I account it one of the circumstances of my life, for which I desire to be thankful, that I have enjoyed the privilege

of practising in the court, and partaking of the society and friendship of that admirable man; and in laying chief stress in this assembly upon his judicial virtues, I am not digressing into subjects in which the majority of my hearers have no interest. It is a great, and sometimes, in its consequences, a most lamentable mistake, to suppose that all sorts and conditions of persons, men and women, are not personally and practically interested in the characters of judges and the movements of the bar. That the lawyers are a very clannish set of persons, and do grieve, perhaps, too monotonously over the memories of their departed brethren, whether of the bench or of the bar; and do, perhaps, exaggerate their relative social and political importance, is probably true: yet, it seems to me almost impossible to magnify the office of jurisprudence, beyond its real consequence in a civilized community.

It is because every thing that is most valued in this world, life, liberty and property, depends upon the due administration of justice; that is, upon justice administered intelligently, impartially, truly; that it comes home to the business, and ought to come home to the bosom of every man. It is not overstating the case to say, that you might shut up Market street and Front street, without any perceptible effect upon the prosperity of the city, compared with that which would be produced by the closing of the doors of the Chesnut street buildings; or, what is the same thing, or perhaps worse, filling the benches with a race of incompetent or impure judges. The ark of justice, that "magnificent and awful cause," is not for the hands of the feeble or the corrupt; and no country or community can long retain the securities of private property, or the blessings of private life, unless these great functions are committed to men elevated above the bar and the people, not only by station and title, but by intellect and character; by competent learning; and what is far higher and better, by a buoyant and sustaining sense of personal independence and dignity.

Wigs and gowns may be worn or rejected, these are but the trappings and the suits of rank ; but if the laws of the land are to be respected, and implicit and universal deference shown to the decrees of justice, those who are charged with the solemn duty of pronouncing those decrees, must, by their individual condition and character, carry with them the respect and the confidence and the faith of the community.

Now, Chief Justice TILGHMAN was, in all respects, as a man and a magistrate, within this category. Appointed to office from the ranks of political opponents, simply because the public interests required it ; without "application" on his own part or "recommendations" from any other quarter ; having no friends to gratify or resentments to indulge ; no motives, either personal or political, to attract or repel him from the even tenor of his way ; his judicial ermine was as unblemished as his judicial life was fruitful of blessings and benefits for his profession and the commonwealth. Soundness and steadiness of decision ; integrity and impartiality, which disdained to be moved by the possible political consequences of an opinion or judgment, and to which it was impossible to imagine the approach of the more sordid and vulgar means of influence ; the gentle demeanour of a man of education and refinement ; a deep conviction of the solemn importance of his official duties ; these were the characteristics of that eminent magistrate, the last of his order whose tenure of office was not to be dependent upon the popular will.

It was a great honour done to this infant Institution, when that distinguished magistrate accepted the office of President ; nor was the acceptance merely nominal, or the office a sinecure. Whenever he was in town he attended the meetings of the board with punctuality and diligence, and took a marked interest in its success and prosperity. The annual address for the year 1822 was from his pen ; and he was a frequent visiter to the rooms. His fortune was not large, and our system of compensation for judges,

gave him no opportunities for accumulating wealth ; but in his last will, he bequeathed to the Athenæum the sum of two hundred dollars, as an evidence of his regard for and interest in the Institution.

Dr. JAMES MEASE, the first Vice-President of the Athenæum, occupied a less conspicuous station in public life than Chief Justice Tilghman ; but was by no means unknown to fame, or undistinguished in the history of our literature and useful arts. A native of Philadelphia, he passed a long and active life in our midst, with credit to himself, and advantage to his fellow-citizens. Dr. Mease was not, I believe, very extensively engaged in the practice of his profession ; but he possessed a competent knowledge of it, and contributed to its improvement and refinement. He was the author or editor of a number of books ; some of a local character, which have served to illustrate the history and statistics of his native place ; others, calculated to promote the cause of scientific agriculture, the moral and mental improvement of mechanics, and the general good of the community. An active member of the Philosophical Society, he contributed by his writings and personal assistance to many other institutions, scientific and literary ; and having paid his full share of that duty of beneficence, which we all owe to the community in which we live, Dr. Mease died, at his residence in this city, on the 15th day of May, 1846, in the 75th year of his age.

ROBERTS VAUX, the first Treasurer of the Athenæum, was a member, and, I believe, a sincere and devout member, of that excellent religious society, to which Pennsylvania owes not only her foundation as a Commonwealth, but most of those principles of political ethics, which, never divorcing the duties from the rights of man, have, thus far, enabled us to maintain our character as a Christian republic. Born in the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1786 ; descended paternally from a family of some distinction in England, both in respect to character and condition, and, on the

maternal side, from some of the old stock of Pennsylvania Quakers, he had philanthropy in his blood, and leisure and means enough for the exercise of it ; and, from his earliest years, his ambition seemed to consist in being useful in his generation. In a hasty sketch like the present, I cannot attempt even an outline of his public services and labours. His private charities were munificent and extensive. It may give some idea of the interest he took in the promotion of letters and the useful arts, as well as in the education of the people, and in the amelioration of punishments, and of the respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens, when I state that, besides being Treasurer and Vice-President of the Athenæum, and also one of its founders, ROBERTS VAUX was President of the Controllors of the Public Schools for this city and county, for thirteen years, that is from 1818 to 1831 ; President of the State Society for the Promotion of General Education ; Secretary, and for some time one of the Vice-Presidents of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons ; a Manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital, and of the Frankford Asylum for the Insane ; a Vice-President of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind ; and an officer of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb ; a Manager of the Philadelphia Dispensary ; of the first Infant School Society ; of the Apprentices' Library Company ; of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society ; and President of the Pennsylvania State Temperance Society ; a member, and an useful member, too, (not a nominal one) of the American Philosophical Society ; of the Academy of Natural Sciences ; of the Franklin Institute ; of the Historical Society ; and of many others, whose existence has been more ephemeral ; besides being an honorary member of several foreign societies. Here are titles as numerous as those of a grandee of Spain, though, it must be confessed, of a character and origin somewhat different ; and if the fashion prevailed in this country of conferring outward and visible decorations upon members of useful and philanthropic societies, as

is the case of the European orders of chivalry, Mr. Vaux would have been covered with stars and ribbons. He was satisfied, however, with the rewards of his own conscience, the stars and ribbons of the inner man, and the respect and gratitude of his fellow-citizens. Philanthropy was the business and pleasure of his whole life; but this philanthropy, I have reason to believe, was a rational and practical system. Like that of William Penn and his contemporary reformers, it was an intelligent, reasonable and common sense principle, which, while it sought to improve the administration of criminal justice, to banish excessive severity from the penal code, and to open the door to reformation in the convict, never lost sight of the distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice, crime and innocence. It neither confounded a wicked will with a morbid intellect; nor cut down the value of innocent human life to the measure of a petty larceny; nor devoted all its sympathies and charities to the convict and the slave; nor made heroes and saints of reformed drunkards and gamblers. In short, the philanthropy of ROBERTS VAUX, like that of the early Quakers, was a sober, practical, earnest, judicious, and consistent love of man, in the fear of God.

Mr. Vaux occupied no undistinguished place among the authors of this country. His *Memoirs of the Lives of Say, of Sandford, and of Benezet*, attest his sincerity in the cause to which he devoted himself; and, with many other productions of his pen, which he furnished for the public journals, or for the transactions of the societies with which he was connected, do credit to his taste and scholarship.

Mr. Vaux possessed a large fortune, and expended it like a man who felt that he was merely a trustee, appointed by Divine Providence, and accountable hereafter not only for its use, but for its non-user. The servant who hid the talent was rebuked by his Lord. Those among us, who pass their days in counting their money and computing their investments, who can find no higher



or worthier objects of ambition than adding field to field, and acre to acre; who see neither duty nor attraction in the advancement of the arts, in the promotion of literature and science, or in the assistance of public charities, such men found no admirers or imitators in ROBERTS VAUX. It has been said, that one of the noblest sights for the gods is a good man struggling with adversity. To my mind, a no less edifying spectacle is that of a man struggling with prosperity; struggling with its temptations and with its obstructions, with its narrowing and hardening influences, with the weights and the cords that bind him to the earth; and overcoming and rising above them all, and retaining that freshness of heart and openness of hand, that kindliness of disposition and those humbler virtues, that are said "to blossom only in the shade." Such a man, I think, was Mr. Vaux; and such a man could not depart from among us without leaving a sensible void. Those who enjoyed his elegant and intellectual hospitality; those who were relieved or promoted in life by his philanthropy; and those who were improved by his instruction or example, all these experienced a loss which the progress of time has hardly replaced in our society.

In this retrospective sketch of some of the earlier officers of the Athenæum, I ought not to omit the names of three of the Directors, all of them excellent and useful men; each of them present at her foundation and interested in her prosperity; and each of them long since gone from the pursuits and pleasures of this world. I mean Mr. EWING, Mr. LOWBER, and Mr. GEORGE VAUX.

Mr. Ewing, who became the third Vice President of the Athenæum, was the son of Dr. Ewing, some time Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, at which institution he received a liberal education, which he improved by very extensive reading. He became a member of the legal profession, and attained considerable success and distinction, without ceasing to bestow a portion of

his time in the cultivation of the garden of letters. Mr. Ewing was a contemporary, and a literary associate and friend of DENNIE, the editor of the *Port Folio*, to whose memory he was warmly attached; and one of that company of men of wit and accomplishments, whom MOORE, the poet, describes in his beautiful verses as "the sacred few, whom late by Delaware's green banks I knew." He became, afterwards, the editor of a magazine, composed principally of republications from English reviews and other periodicals. Mr. Ewing was remarkable, during his whole life, for the kindliness of his friendship, his social disposition, and conversational powers. He would have been a welcome member of those literary clubs, in which the wits and writers of London have delighted to congregate. Mr. Ewing died in the month of February, 1825, after a lingering illness, having lived just long enough to hear of and rejoice in the election of his old friend and literary companion, Mr. John Quincy Adams, to the office of President of the United States.

Mr. LOWBER was, also, a member of the bar, and had advanced himself by his talents, learning and industry, to a considerable eminence among his brethren, when he was attacked by a pulmonary complaint, which disabled him from further active exertion in the struggles of that toilsome and exhausting profession. He made a voyage to the West Indies, I believe, without much actual advantage to his health. On his return, he was elected President of that most excellent and useful institution, The Philadelphia Saving Fund Society, the duties of which he discharged to the satisfaction of all concerned, until his death, which took place on the fourth day of May, 1834, when he was in the forty-fifth year of his age.

Mr. GEORGE VAUX was a cousin, I believe, of Roberts Vaux; and, like him, a native of Philadelphia, and a member of the Society of Friends; warmly attached to the place of his birth, and proud and fond of her institutions and habits, but no less attached

to the comforts and charms of private and domestic life; and one of that class of gentlemen, unfortunately, perhaps, too numerous in this country, whom no earthly consideration could induce to take part in the management of public affairs, or to mingle in the bustle and scramble of politics, "*fumum strepitumque Romæ*." Mr. Vaux studied the law for a profession, but I believe did not undertake the practice of it; having sufficient fortune, and no ambition for forensic distinction. Although averse from political life, he served with credit and usefulness in our municipal councils; and we are indebted, I understand, among other things, to his good taste and scientific knowledge, for the opening and improvement of the beautiful square west of us, and for the selection of the numerous rare and beautiful trees by which it is embellished. Mr. Vaux died in 1836, only a few days after his cousin, Roberts Vaux, and in the 56th year of his age.

At the election for Directors, held by the Stockholders in February, 1817, we had, for the first time, the benefit of the services of WILLIAM LEHMAN, to whose liberal bequest we are mainly indebted for the means of erecting the beautiful edifice in which we are now assembled. It is highly proper and suitable, therefore, that we should devote a portion of our time, on this occasion, to the memory of a man, who has so strong a claim to *our* gratitude, and to the thanks of *all* the friends of literature; and who was, besides, distinguished by his public services as a statesman and legislator, and especially deserving of public commemoration for his remarkable exertions in the great cause of internal improvement.

WILLIAM LEHMAN was born in Philadelphia, on the 14th of September, 1779; and was descended from that Saxon stock, which, having in early days inoculated Britain with its blood and vigour, centuries afterwards, sent its yet sturdy children to till this virgin soil; and again to mingle their race with the more intellectual, perhaps, but less patient and persevering, colonists from other

parts of Europe. Pennsylvania, it is well known, owes a large proportion of her teeming harvests and abundant granaries to the industry and prudence of her German population; but, although some learned men have appeared, chiefly among their clergy, it is certain that literature and the fine arts have not been cultivated by them with equal success.

The ancestors of William Lehman, however, were men of some eminence and deserved distinction, abroad and at home. John George Lehman, from whom he was descended in the fourth generation, was Farmer General of the Revenues and Lands of the Manor of Tribigen, in the Electorate of Saxony. His son, Philip Theodore, a man of letters and learning, emigrated to this country, and became one of the secretaries of William Penn; and in that capacity, wrote the celebrated Letter to the Indians of Canada, dated the 23d of June, 1692, the original of which is framed and hung up in the capitol at Harrisburg. Christian Lehman, the grandfather of our William Lehman, seems to have been a man of considerable accomplishments, in reference to the time and place in which he flourished. He was conversant with the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German and English languages, and cultivated astronomy and the higher mathematics, with remarkable success. He corresponded with Rittenhouse, the celebrated astronomer, descended, like himself, from a German stock; and whose letters to him are still preserved among the family papers. Having a sufficient fortune, he was able to devote his time and thoughts to the pursuits of science and literature; happier, doubtless, in his simple and sequestered life, than if it had been passed in the worship of Mammon, or the struggle and glitter of politics.

His grandson, WILLIAM LEHMAN, inherited his literary tastes; and was carefully and religiously educated by his father, who is said to have been a man of earnest piety and exact morals. Having passed with credit through the University of Pennsylvania, he attended the medical lectures, and is said to have reached the

degree, and certainly bore the title, of Doctor of Medicine. The condition of his bodily health compelled him to forego the practice of the healing art; if he had at any time the intention of engaging in it as a profession. His father left him a moderate fortune, which he augmented by his skilful and industrious application to the business of a druggist. Having or making ample leisure, notwithstanding a regular and constant application to that business, he continued all his life a hard student, and a constant and universal reader; and, mindful of the old axiom, "*Studium sine calamo somnum*," he was in the practice of analysing the books which he read, and of extracting or copying passages from them, which he considered striking in point of style or diction, or instructive in thought, or useful in respect to materials. It will, probably, surprise my hearers to learn, that he left behind him between five and six thousand MS. books, of the size called "copy books," filled with extracts from works which he had perused; most of them of a useful and practical character, and accompanied with his own comments and illustrations. He was a proficient in the Latin, French, and German languages; the two latter of which he spoke with fluency. He visited Europe three times; and his notes of travel, some of which I have seen, bear evidence to his inquiring mind and just observation.

If this were all that I could say of our lamented benefactor, it would be no small praise; thus distinguished in an age of such exclusive devotion to the accumulation of wealth, and the advancement of our material and earthly nature. Mr. Lehman's life, however, was a practical refutation of the notion, that the love of literature and science, and a daily worship at their altars, are incompatible with success in ordinary business, or distinction in public life. I have already said, that Mr. Lehman added to his paternal fortune, by his success in the business of a druggist, which was conducted upon a large scale. As a public man, he was eminently useful and distinguished. Having been one of the

first to perceive the advantages of improving the internal communications of the country, and thereby increasing the trade and prosperity of his native city and state, he became an earnest advocate of the system, through the press and at public meetings. Elected to the Legislature of the Commonwealth in the year 1814, he continued, by annual elections, to represent the city of Philadelphia during the long period of fifteen years. During all this time, he devoted himself to the great cause which he had so much at heart, with a zeal, industry, intelligence and steadfastness, which have rarely been equalled; and by his conciliatory demeanour, and the confidence which was universally reposed in his integrity and singleness of purpose, he gained friends and supporters to the cause where others failed; and had the unusual fortune to be elected to the legislature by the votes of his political opponents, at periods when no others of his party were successful. He lived to witness the commencement of the great works for which he had so strenuously laboured, and from which he augured so many benefits for his native Commonwealth, and died at Harrisburg, in the performance of his public duties, "with harness on his back," on the 29th day of March, 1829, in the 50th year of his age.

A simple but graceful monument of white marble, erected by a sister's love, in the burying ground of the German Lutheran Church, at Harrisburg, in which his remains repose, and sculptured with appropriate allusions to the objects and pursuits of his official life, records her sense of his private worth and public virtues, and affords the only surviving memorial of his labours and sacrifices in the public cause.

It is thus with mankind everywhere, and under all dynasties, whether of princes or people—We provide elaborate funerals, and erect costly monuments, for those who fall on the field of battle; but the benefactors of their race, those who have adorned their country by their genius and virtues; those who have improved

her arts and sciences, or in the walks of peaceful life developed her resources, these steal quietly to their graves, and rest there undistinguished from the selfish and the sordid, unless domestic affection places some memorial upon the spot.

In the burying ground at the junction of Arch and Fifth streets, in a remote and secluded corner, out of the high road and broad-way of funerals and visitors, there is a plain, flat stone, of dark, gray marble, having inscribed upon it only two or three letters of the alphabet of our language, which the individual, whose earthly remains rest below it, wielded by his powerful writings in the cause of his country's independence and freedom, with an influence and effect equal, certainly, to those produced by the weapons of warfare, and in support and vindication of the soundest principles of moral and political philosophy. No other inscription reveals the grave of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. He who came to this city as a wandering apprentice boy, and bought a penny roll at the foot of Market street to relieve his hunger, and afterwards stood before Kings and Cæsars as the representative of his emancipated and independent country, lies in characteristic simplicity in an unadorned and almost unknown grave, surrounded by florid tombstones, eloquent of the merits and virtues of the tender husbands and devoted parents who sleep beneath them.

In the testament of William Lehman, which is dated the 26th of July, A. D. 1827, is contained the following passage:—"I give and bequeath to the *Athenæum of Philadelphia* the sum of ten thousand dollars, for the construction of a suitable building."

The merit and weight of a gift to a worthy public object ought to be measured by the means of the donor, and to a certain extent, at least, by the habits of the community in which he lived. Now, although Dr. Lehman's fortune was sufficient for all the reasonable purposes of life, it was not what is called a large one. He could hardly be reckoned among the wealthy men of this city; and he left behind him relatives, and others who had claims upon

his posthumous bounty. In reference to this element, the legacy was undoubtedly liberal.

In comparison with others, however, it is entitled to higher praise. I don't know why it is, but there seems to be something in the atmosphere of Philadelphia, which is not very favourable to the growth or development of Mæcenases. Somehow or other, the fleeces of our literary institutions have remained dry in the midst of copious showers. Look, again, at that Public Library of ours, to which I have already called your attention. For what considerable pecuniary gift or legacy is she indebted to any one of the long train of rich citizens of Philadelphia, who have gone from their counting-houses and stores to their graves, through the countless blessings and securities which literature and science have diffused around them? The largest gift of books to that Library proceeded from an English clergyman. The next, I believe, in number, was the legacy of a native of Scotland, who had resided some time here.

Compare for a moment—for in this connexion comparisons are not odious—what has been done here for literary institutions, with what has been given in Boston, for instance, and I am afraid that the result will be anything but gratifying to our municipal vanity. Take a single case, which has recently been brought to my notice. On the foundation-stone of the new building about to be erected for the Boston Athenæum, is an inscription, which I have copied, because it contains a rather striking memorial, and may serve to furnish an useful example or hint.

*“Principal Endowments of the Boston Athenæum before the Year 1847.*

The sum of forty-two thousand dollars was raised for the general purposes of the Athenæum, by voluntary subscriptions for shares created in 1807.



JAMES PERKINS, in 1821, gave his own costly mansion in Pearl street, which, from that time, has been the seat of the Institution.

In the same year, the sum of twenty-two thousand dollars was raised by voluntary subscriptions for shares.

THOMAS HANDASYD PERKINS (beside his earlier and later valuable donations) and JAMES PERKINS, the younger, seconded, in 1826, the liberality of the brother and the father, each giving eight thousand dollars; and the sum of their contributions was increased to forty-five thousand dollars by other subscriptions, obtained chiefly through the efforts and influence of Nathaniel Bowditch, Francis Calley Gray, George Ticknor, and Thomas Wren Ward.

AUGUSTUS THORNDIKE, in 1823, gave a choice collection of casts of the most celebrated ancient statues.

GEORGE WATSON BRIMMER, in 1838, gave a magnificent collection of books on the Fine Arts.

JOHN BROMFIELD, in 1846, gave twenty-five thousand dollars as a fund, to be regularly increased by one-quarter of the income, of which the other three-quarters are to be annually applied to the purchase of books for ever.

The sum of seventy-five thousand dollars, for the erection of this building, was raised by voluntary subscription for shares created in 1844."

It is right, I think, to add in this place, that by the prudent and faithful management of the successive Treasurers\* and Board of

\* The prosperous condition of the Lehman fund, and of the finances of the Athenæum generally, is in a great measure owing to the good sense, sound judgment, and constant vigilance of QUINTIN CAMPBELL, Esq., for a long time the respected cashier of the Philadelphia Bank, and who, for twenty-six years, viz. from 1817 to 1843, performed the duties of Treasurer of the Athenæum. Mr. Campbell resigned the office on the 13th of February, 1843, and was succeeded by the present worthy and highly respectable incumbent, MORDECAI D. LEWIS, Esq.

Directors, the legacy of Dr. Lehman, which, in consequence of a tax, by no means creditable to the liberality of our Commonwealth, was reduced to \$9750, amounted on the first day of January last to the sum of \$24,845.45; every dollar and cent of which has been realized in money, and now appear before you in the shape of brick and mortar and timber, and the other materials of this edifice.

I come now, in the course of events, to another distinguished individual connected with the Athenæum, whose personal appearance and habits, both of them sufficiently striking or peculiar, must be fresh in the recollection of most of those who hear me. I mean the late Mr. DU PONCEAU, who was elected Vice-President, on the death of Mr. Ewing; and in the following year succeeded Chief Justice Tilghman in the office of President of this Society.

This eminent scholar was a native of France; having been born on the third of June, 1760, in the isle of Rhè; where his father had a military command; for which profession, also, the son was destined. On the death of his father, he was persuaded by his mother to enter the ecclesiastical order; but the young Abbé Du Ponceau, (those who knew him only in later years will smile at this title) though he submitted to the tonsure, soon got enough of the restraints and privations of a religious life; and, in 1775, he abandoned it and repaired to Paris, where he gained a precarious subsistence by teaching and translating; having previously made himself master of the English and Italian languages. Here he made the acquaintance of Baron Steuben, and was induced to accompany that celebrated disciplinarian to the United States, in the double capacity of his private secretary and aid-de-camp. This was in 1777. From the time of his arrival, until the winter of 1779, he attended the baron in his military operations. He then left the army; in 1781 became a citizen of Pennsylvania; and in the following year was appointed secretary to

Mr. Livingston, who had the department of foreign affairs. The business of the office was transacted in that narrow, two-story building, which most of us remember, situate on the east side of Sixth street, adjoining the one-story office, afterwards occupied by Mr. Du Ponceau for his professional business. Both of them, however, the old revolutionary building, and the more modern office, have been swept away by the progress of improvement, as it is called, which, in its irresistible march, levels every thing that stands in its way; and very soon will leave nothing above ground to remind us of either the primitive or revolutionary days of Pennsylvania.

At the close of the war, Mr. Du Ponceau studied the law; and not long afterwards was admitted to practice. In a letter which he did me the honour to address to me on the occasion of a memoir of Mr. Rawle which I wrote, he says, "I married in the year 1788, and from that time I began to lead a very retired life, attending only to the duties of my profession. In the same year, the Federal Constitution was promulgated. Mr. Rawle and I took different sides. I regret to say that I belonged to what was called the Anti-Federal party; I thought I was right; subsequent events have proved that I was in the wrong."

For many years, Mr. Du Ponceau occupied a prominent place at the bar of this city, and was frequently employed in the supreme court of the United States at Washington, whither he went with his eminent contemporaries, Mr. Rawle, Mr. Tilghman, Mr. Ingersoll and Mr. Dallas. In the letter which I have mentioned, the style and substance of which are so agreeable, that one regrets that Mr. Du Ponceau did not write memoirs of his times, and of the distinguished men he had met with; he thus speaks of those journeys:—

"The court sat there, as it does at present, or did, until lately, in the month of February; so that we had to travel in the depth of winter, through bad roads, in the midst of rain, hail and snow,

in no very comfortable way. Nevertheless, as soon as we were out of the city, and felt the flush of air, we were like school boys on the play ground on a holiday, and we began to kill time by all the means that our imagination could suggest. Flashes of wit shot their corruscations on all sides; puns of the genuine Philadelphia stamp were handed about; old college stories were revived; macaronic Latin was spoken with great purity; songs were sung, even classical songs, among which I recollect the famous bacchanalian of the Arch Deacon of Oxford, ‘*Mihi est propositum in taberna mori* ;’ in short, we might have been taken for any thing but the grave counsellors of the celebrated bar of Philadelphia.”

On their return from one of these expeditions, the merriment of these venerable persons became so excessive, as to upset the driver, who lost his reins; the horses ran away at a frightful rate; all but Mr. Du Ponceau leaped from the stage, and were more or less bruised: he kept his seat and took snuff with mechanical regularity and characteristic abstraction. “We had,” he said in the same letter to me, “a narrow escape. I am now left alone in the stage of life, which they were doomed also to leave before me. I hope I shall meet them safe again in a better place.”

Mr. Du Ponceau made himself at home in this community, much more thoroughly than his countrymen in general do. He mastered our language completely; and spoke and wrote it with a precision and facility, that made it difficult to say that he was not “native and to the manner born.” The slightest imaginable accent revealed his French origin; but nothing betrayed his Roman Catholic education or his royalist connexion. He professed a devout admiration of our political and social creeds; and manifested the utmost reverence for the founder and early law-givers of Pennsylvania. He suggested, and took an active part in establishing the Society for Commemorating the Landing of Wil-

liam Penn ; which, afterwards, unfortunately, died of exaggeration and collapse.

We met, originally, with great and appropriate simplicity, in the small, low, two-story building in Lætitia court, then kept as a tavern or eating-house, by a worthy Irishman of the name of Doyle ; but traditionally said to have been one of the chief places of residence of the great man, whose advent to this land we were met to celebrate. A circumstance occurred at the outset, which was characteristic of Mr. Du Ponceau's absence of mind. A committee was appointed, of which he was made the chairman, to draw up a constitution and by-laws for the society. I happened to be one of the committee. After waiting some time for a summons from the chairman of the committee to retire, and enter upon the consideration of the subject referred to us, we were surprised to see him rise and taking from his pocket a manuscript of some length, announce that the committee had retired, and considered the subject, and drawn up the requisite documents, and directed him to report them. All this had passed through his mind ; and he thought it had passed through the committee. Of course, we acquiesced in the report ; and the constitution thus engendered was adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Du Ponceau's reverence for the primitive days and early inhabitants of Pennsylvania, may be seen in various parts of his writings. In his Discourse "On the Early History of Pennsylvania," delivered before the Philosophical Society, in 1821, he thus speaks :—

"Pennsylvania once realized what never existed before, except in fabled story. Not that her citizens were entirely free from the passions of human nature ; for they were men, not angels ; but it is certain that no country on earth ever exhibited such a scene of happiness, innocence and peace, as was witnessed here during the first century of our social existence. I well remember them ; those patriarchal times, when simple, yet not inelegant manners

prevailed every where among us ; when rusticity was devoid of roughness ; and polished life diffused its mild radiance around, unassuming and unenvied ; when society was free from the constraint of etiquette and parade ; when love was not crossed by avarice or pride ; and friendships were unbroken by ambition and intrigue. This was the spectacle, which Pennsylvania offered even in the midst of the storms of our revolution ; and which she continued to exhibit until a sudden influx of riches broke in upon the land, and brought in its train luxury, more baneful than war. ‘*Sævior armis, luxuria incubuit.*’ This torrent (he continues) has been checked in its course ;” (this it will be remembered was in 1821, twenty-six years ago ;) “we are gradually returning to those moderate habits, which we never should have abandoned. But we are too far advanced in population and arts, ever to see our ancient manners restored in their primitive purity ; all that we can do now, is to preserve their memory as a subject of pride to their descendants, and of admiration to succeeding generations through the world.”

Mr. Du Ponceau, among his other acquirements, was a great philologist ; and was deeply versed, if I may so speak, in the comparative anatomy of languages. His treatises upon the Chinese tongue display great learning and ingenuity ; and, with his other writings, acquired for him a distinguished reputation abroad and at home. Full of years and literary distinctions, he reached the elevated station of President of the American Philosophical Society ; and after a slow and rather painful descent down the hill of life, he died in his old-fashioned house, at the corner of Chesnut and Sixth streets, on the first day of April, 1844, in the 84th year of his age.

By his will, Mr. Du Ponceau made several liberal bequests, both in money and in valuable books, to the various literary and scientific societies with which he was connected ; and, among other things, he bequeathed to the Athenæum of Philadelphia the

sum of two hundred dollars ; and he concluded his will, with characteristic simplicity and earnestness, in the following words : “ These objects being very near to my heart, I have ventured to give vent to my feelings upon them. Perhaps it is out of place ; but my heart is full, and I could not help it ; I now bid farewell to my friends, and conclude this will, written in ten pages, in my handwriting, this 13th of November, 1839.”

Under the charge and direction of the worthy and eminent persons of whom I have given these imperfect memorials, and of their contemporaries and successors, the Athenæum has pursued its useful, but quiet and unpretending course for thirty-four years ; and I believe that its management has thus far received the approbation of the Stockholders and visitors generally.

There is certainly one feature in the direction of the affairs of the Athenæum, to which we can appeal with entire confidence. I mean the absolute impartiality in respect to parties, sects and opinions, with which it has hitherto been conducted. Its doors have been open, and will continue to be open, to all varieties of doctrine and opinion, political and religious.

In the newspaper room, you will find the principal political journals from the chief places of this country and Europe ; Whig and Democrat, Abolition, Radical and Conservative. Every form and subdivision of political parties may find there its oracle and its antagonist. The religious or polemic world is not less abundantly provided for. On the tables, in the book room, I have seen lying together, the Catholic Herald and the Jewish Advocate ; the Banner of the Cross and the Evangelical Luminary ; the Presbyterian Magazine and the Methodist Review ; the Swedenborgian Chronicle and the Millennial Harbinger ; the Unitarian Examiner and the Protestant Churchman ; all apparently in perfectly good humour with themselves and their neighbours, or fluttered only by the wind that opened their pages, and ready for the examination or criticism of every visitor ; and offering to the pious or curious reader, an un-

restrained choice of high church and low church creeds, dogmas and discipline. The same principle has prevailed in the selection of magazines and reviews, books and pamphlets. All varieties of opinion and taste have been consulted and respected, so far as they have been suggested or made known, and so far as our funds permitted. The only limits have been those drawn or recognised by religion and morals. It must not be imagined, because all shades of religious belief are represented in this parliament of pamphlets, that infidelity also has here its delegate ; or that those wretched publications with which city and country, steamboats, cars, and hotels, are deluged, depraving alike the tastes and the morals of the young ; cheap, plausible and popular ; one of the worst features and worst signs of the times ; it must not be imagined, I say, that such poison, and such trash as this, finds its way to the tables of the Athenæum. The Directors have endeavoured to gratify every healthy taste and supply every rational want.

Another feature of this Institution, to which I would advert with complacency, but certainly without boasting, is the free admission which it has always afforded to strangers ; meaning by this term persons not permanently residing in the city, or within ten miles of it, introduced by members. It may be worthy of remark and remembrance, that, according to a register kept by our worthy and attentive Librarian, more than thirty thousand strangers have visited the rooms, and availed themselves of the facilities and conveniences which they afford. During certain years the number has exceeded one thousand annually ; including representatives of every civilized country and community.

Whatever may be the deficiencies of our catalogue, in respect to the standard works of English literature, I believe that it will not be easy to find in this country, a more complete or various collection of periodical literature ; from the daily journal, through the various monthlies and quarterlies to the annual registers. I remember hearing Mr. Jeffrey, the accomplished and thoroughly



informed editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, say, that he found here literary and scientific journals of his own country that he had never seen in Europe. Our library consists now, I am informed, of nearly 10,000 volumes. We receive twenty-four foreign journals, scientific and literary; and twenty-five American. We take five foreign newspapers, and sixty-two American; one, at least, I believe, from every State.

Among the curiosities of literature in our rooms, is a large collection of pamphlets bound into one hundred and forty-eight volumes, which belonged to Dr. Franklin; some of them containing his manuscript notes and marginal remarks: and a regular series of the *Journal de Paris*, bound in volumes, and continued during the whole of the eventful period of the French Revolution.

We are now, it is to be presumed, permanently established in this building; which, we trust, will in all respects, both in its exterior and internal arrangement, meet the expectations and wishes of the Stockholders. Those who expected an edifice of greater dimensions, or more florid architecture, or a greater number of rooms, or greater variety of accommodation, should bear in mind, that our funds were of very moderate amount, and that while we felt ourselves bound by a sense of duty to our principal benefactor, as well as by a certain legal responsibility in respect to the bequest, not to delay to a later period the commencement of the building, we considered ourselves no less bound to avoid the burthen of a considerable debt. The result has been the Hall in which we are now assembled.

I am sure that all will agree with me in commending the architect, for the simplicity and good taste of the design, and for the general adaptation of the interior to its purposes; while, I believe, that the Directors are satisfied with his fidelity to his engagements. It is only the second story of the building, as you may perceive, that is at present occupied by the Athenæum. The remaining

apartments, which have thus far been rented, will be used for objects not very dissimilar to those of our Institution. The eastern rooms in the basement story, have been let for a term of years to the Controllers of the Public Schools, for the purposes of the great system of public education, which is carried on with signal success in this city and its neighbourhood; and which is destined, I trust, with the aid of the indispensable element of religious instruction, to exercise a blessed and enduring influence upon our people and their institutions.

One of the apartments, immediately over us, is to be occupied by the Historical Society; kindred, in some measure, in purpose with ours. This valuable Institution, known to, or at least duly appreciated by, I am afraid, only a small portion of our community, has been in existence for about twenty-two years; and although suffering from penury, both in members and in purse, it has done great service to the history and character of our Commonwealth, by the valuable contributions which have enriched its Transactions; by the republication of scarce tracts; and by the collection and preservation of pamphlets, which might otherwise have perished. The fact that this valuable Society is very inadequately supported; that its narrow income, barely sufficient for the most economical disbursements, is derived exclusively from the small annual contributions of its members, most of them young men and professional persons of very moderate means; that it has no endowments and no capital fund; is, I regret to say, any thing but creditable to Philadelphia.

Doubtless, there are some of the frequenters of the Athenæum, to whom the change of place and circumstance is any thing but an improvement. After nearly thirty years spent in those cool and quiet, though rather insufficient rooms, opening upon that old fashioned square, the classic ground of the Revolution, fruitful of recollections and productive of incidents of present interest, I do not wonder, for my part, that a certain degree of attachment has

sprung up for the place, and that a certain regret is felt at quitting it. After a little while, however, I trust that every body will be satisfied with the change. If we could have been sure of a permanent tenure of the old rooms, and had no duty devolved upon us in respect to building, I believe that we should all have been content to remain where we were. But we had promised, from the earliest day, to have a house of our own; we had accepted the bequest of Dr. Lehman, and were under obligations that left us no choice but to employ our funds for this purpose. After long inquiry and due deliberation, and after consultation with the Stockholders, the present spot was selected. It has, we think, many great local advantages, and as few inconveniences or drawbacks as could have been anticipated.

In respect to distances, it is as nearly central as any site that could be obtained, with the means in our power. Certainly, in reference to the pursuits or places of business of our Stockholders, as well as their residences, it may be considered quite as central as the rooms in the Philosophical Hall were in 1818, when we removed there. Then, if we have lost one open square, we have gained another of greater dimensions, and more various foliage and attractions; and if we have lost sight of the Hall of Independence, and the disciples of Themis, we have also left the Mayor's Office, and the "Black Maria," the "genius loci," and the sights and sounds and smells of that congregation of vice and misery, which came, or rather was brought every morning to pay its devotions in a temple almost in contact with the newspaper room. So that, upon the whole, we trust that all persons will be satisfied with the present apartments and present neighbourhood of the Athenæum; and that before long the most devoted admirer of the past will find, in the more ample space and abundant conveniences of these rooms, in their free and wholesome air, and comparative quiet, abundant compensation for the change of locality.

It must not be supposed, however, that the duties of the Direc-

tors, in respect to the building, cease with the opening of these rooms. There are two essential things yet to be done. First, every dollar of debt that has been incurred for the purchase of this lot must be discharged. This is a serious duty, incumbent upon all; Stockholders and Directors. We trust that the Stockholders will be urgent and unremitting in their efforts to obtain additions to their number, and to procure subscriptions, gifts, and bequests. On the part of the Directors, I may promise that no expenditures shall be made, beyond what is necessary for the supply and support of the Institution; and that every dollar that remains beyond these charges, shall be applied to the formation of a sinking fund, by the operation of which the debt may be finally absorbed or liquidated.

In the next place, and after the payment of the debt in full, the time must come when the whole or the greater portion of this building must be devoted to the purposes for which it was established. We must have a lecture-room and gratuitous lectures, such as those of the Lowell Institution in Boston; apartments for the proper reception and display of useful instruments and inventions, minerals, medals, coins, and other curiosities; rooms for conversation and various other valuable purposes. The Institution will then bear a nearer resemblance to those establishments of Greece and Rome from which it derived its name—it must be confessed a rather ambitious title for the past and present character and capabilities of these rooms.

Before closing this, already, I am afraid, tedious address, I ought to state, that besides the legacies and gifts already enumerated, we received from Mr. John Levett Harris, of Burlington, a bequest of five hundred volumes of valuable books, and from Mr. John Savage, a legacy of one thousand dollars in cash, and of a contingent interest in the whole of his large estate; and that we are indebted to Mr. Breck, the present worthy and distinguished President of the Institution, for a gift of nearly nine hundred

volumes, comprising some of the best authors in the French and English language, and for a very recent valuable donation of books. Mr. Nathan Dunn, too, testified his regard for the Institution by including us among his residuary legatees. The unfortunate result of the removal of his Chinese collection to Europe, will, it is believed, prevent any thing being realized from this source.

In conclusion, I think it right to say, that there are passages in this address, in which only my individual opinions and sentiments are expressed; and for which the Directors of this Institution are in no wise responsible.

I am sure, however, that I speak their unanimous opinion when I say, that we feel ourselves greatly honoured by the presence, on this occasion, of so numerous and respectable an assemblage; and that we are sensible of one drawback only in the gratification which it is calculated to inspire; the reflection, namely, that in all human probability, these rooms will not, at least in the ordinary course of things, be again favoured with the presence of that sex, which adorns and refines, wherever its higher and nobler mission does not call upon it to relieve and improve. Let us indulge the hope that the time is not far distant, when this exclusiveness on the part of man, will give way to a more just sense of his relative importance and dignity in the scale of society and the arrangements of Providence; and that he will at last be convinced, that there are other places besides ball-rooms and theatres in which the sexes can meet on terms of equality.

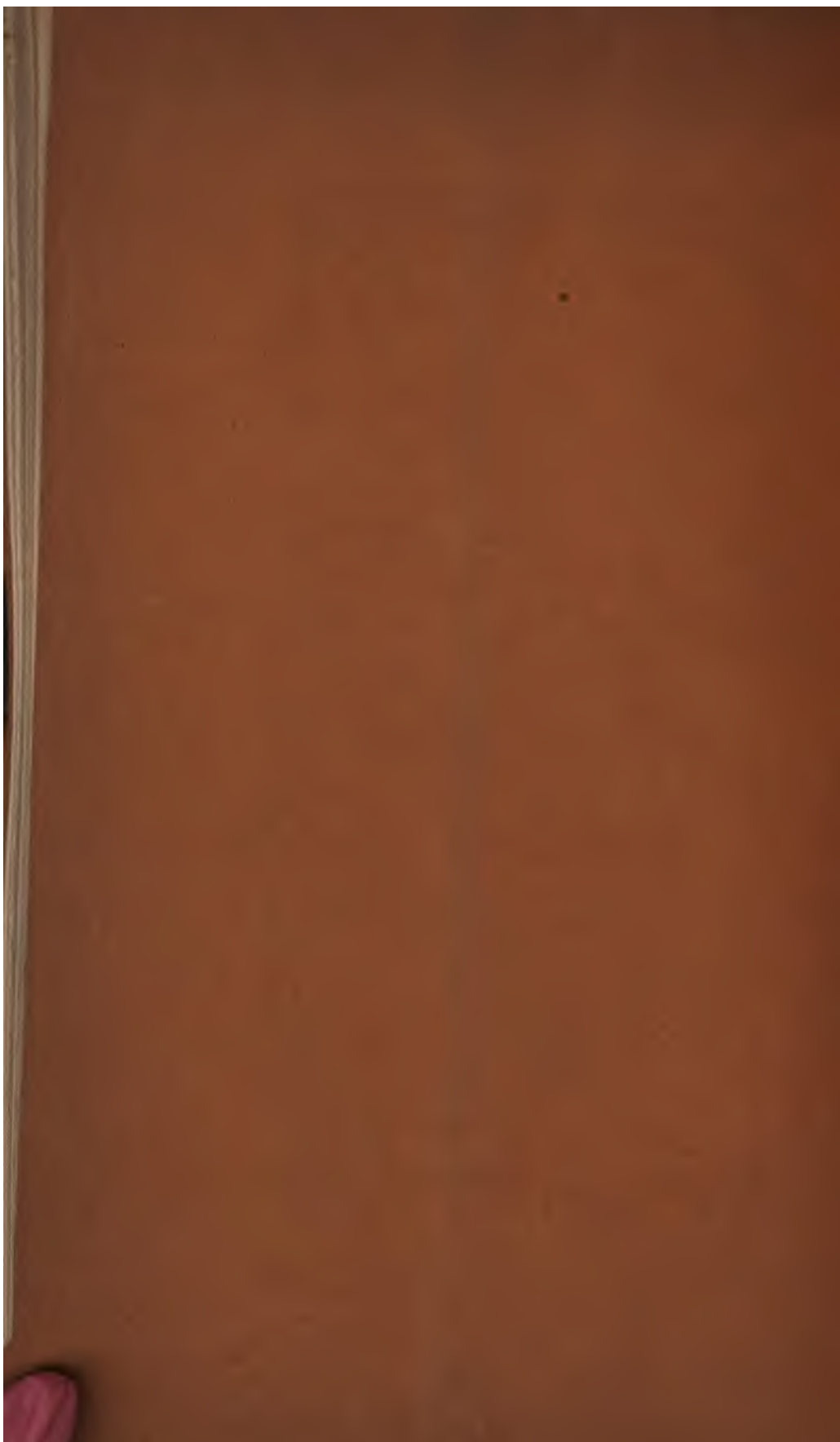














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